

Community Preservation Act Committee- Proposal Request Form for FY 2017

Project Title:

ACC Housing Stabilization Program

CPA funding category: Check all that apply

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Housing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Open Space
<input type="checkbox"/>	Historic Preservation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation

Amount of CPA Funds Requested:

\$251,457

Submitting Entity:

Amherst Community Connections

Contact Person:

Hwei-Ling Greeney

Phone: (413) 345-0737

Email: greeneyh@juno.com

Please complete this form in its entirety and include the following in your proposal.

Overview of Proposal: Please describe your project and your feasibility analysis.

Amherst Community Connections (ACC) requests \$251,457 in CPA funds to create a three-year housing stabilization program for chronically homeless individuals, providing tenant-based rental assistance along with personalized supportive services to 5 chronically homeless individuals. Chronic homelessness is characterized by long-term homelessness and serious disabling conditions. As of the Annual Point in Time (PIT) Count conducted in January, 2015, there are 19 chronically homeless individuals in Amherst.

The current supply of housing does not address the needs of this population. Public housing has lengthy wait lists with screen-out criteria, market rentals are too expensive, and housing with wrap-around services for homeless individuals with disabilities do not exist in Amherst. In the absence of a long-term solution, the Amherst community must come together to create innovative, affordable and appropriate housing options for chronically homeless individuals. ACC thus requests CPA funds for a multi-year housing stabilization program in the form of tenant-based rental assistance and supportive services. This program would meet the housing gap within the Amherst community and help these individuals begin

the process of stabilization based on their Amherst affiliations and immediate housing options. Three years would provide sufficient time to help participants become accustomed to living in their own apartment, adjusting to its responsibilities, while addressing critical challenges in their lives and planning next steps.

In preparation for its tenant-based rental assistance program, ACC has increased efforts to engage chronically homeless individuals to apply for public and private subsidized housing. Through ACC's mobile case management, information/referral and advocacy program, ACC conducts the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) survey to prioritize the highest-risk individuals and streamline them into this housing program. ACC has also engaged with local landlords and identified appropriate housing with access to the bus line. Tenants will pay 30% of their adjusted gross income towards housing-related costs. ACC will help participants without income to increase their income through SSI/SSDI, emergency cash, and employment.

Supportive services are crucial to the success of the housing stabilization program. Chronically homeless individuals require intensive case management and a range of different supportive services to become stabilized in housing and financially self-sufficient and engage in activities that foster growth and fulfillment. Intensive case management includes assessment of housing barriers and services needs, creation of individual action plans to accomplish housing and services goals, coordination of services, counseling and support, crisis intervention, intensive assistance with accessing mainstream services and other community-based resources. Emphasis will be placed on behavioral health and primary health issues, substance abuse, independent living skills, and employment/educational goals. For a list of services and referrals, see Attachment 1, Menu of Services and Referrals Available to Tenants.

ACC's service philosophy is to provide services that help tenants increase their ability to lead safe, healthy, financially independent, and enriching lives. ACC staff will provide individualized services to help tenants meet their own goals regarding housing, services and other areas.

ACC's Executive Director will provide oversight of the program and supervision of the Housing and Services Case Manager. The Case Manager will provide case management and coordination of services such as substance abuse treatment program, mental health counseling and other services to the tenants. Even though participation in supportive services is voluntary, the Case Manager will provide on-going engagement to connect participants with the treatment programs and services they need. The Case Manager will be a part-time staff member with extensive experience in homelessness and mental health background who will collect data and keep current reports and information for each participant in the program.

ACC staff will regularly evaluate the outcomes of the housing stabilization through a variety of ways. Quantitative outcome objectives include:

- Tenants who enter without any income will have income from employment or public assistance for which they are eligible within six months of enrollment, as feasible.
- Within 30 days of engaging in services, 100% of participants will develop an individualized housing and services plan, which establishes goals, objectives and action steps.
- Support service staff will conduct outreach to and engagement with 100% of the tenants in the program.

Describe how your request meets the CPA criteria:

1. Description of funding needed, including:

a. Documentation of cost estimates, budget

ACC estimates that the annual cost of this program for five participants will be \$89,099. Three years' worth of funding will be \$267,297. ACC is requesting CPA funds for the rent-related costs and case management services, which will cost \$83,819 each year, which amounts to \$251,457 for three years. ACC will provide in-kind contributions for the program-related costs, which will be \$5,280 per year, which will be a total of \$15,840 for three years. The rent-related estimates contained in the attached budget are based on the Amherst Housing Authority's Section 8 Monthly Rental Payment Standards. The supportive service component is based on ACC projects of similar scope and size. Should actual CPA funds be less than requested amount, funds will return to CPA. ACC will issue a monthly invoice to the town and be reimbursed on a monthly basis. See Attachment 2, for the Preliminary Budget for Housing Stabilizations Program.

b. Other sources of funding, e.g., grants, self-funding, fund-raising

ACC will fundraise \$5,280 for the first year of the program and fundraise \$15,840 for three years to pay for the in-kind contribution of program costs.

c. Timeline on how CPA funds would be spent, including over multiple years

ACC expects to begin expending funds in the summer of 2016 and to have fully drawn down the first year of the award by the fall of 2017. Below is a summary chart of the phases of development.

Phase	Timeline	Notes
Pre-screening	January 2016 - June 2016	Screening methodology: 1. VI-SPDAT, a field-tested homeless assessment tool, will be used. 2. Housing barriers assessment will be conducted.
Screen-in Selection	July 2016	Selection criteria: 1. Caseworker assessment 2. Amherst residency 3. Those with VI-SPDAT scores 10 or higher
Lease-up	July 1, 2016	Leasing options: 1. Kamins Real Estate has housing options that fall within Amherst Housing Authority Rent Reasonableness standard--\$900 for 1-BR 2. Other private landlords with units in Amherst
Case Management, Social Services Coordination, and Tenant	July 1, 2016	Tenant-centered case management and services coordination: 1. Housing barriers assessment and social service needs assessment 2. Individual housing and services action plan

Engagement		3. Services referrals to reach personal milestones Housing-Focused Goals: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing stabilization 2. Increasing income/benefits 3. Achieving independence and self-sufficiency
Tenant Housing Stability Assessment, quarterly	October 2016, January 2017, April 2017, July 2017	The Well-Being Matrix includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing 2. Income 3. Mental Health/Substance abuse
Second Year of Project	July 2017 – June 2018	Supportive Services program will be refined according to evaluations.
Third Year of Project	July 2018 – June 2019	See above.

2. Urgency of the Project, if any.

In 2013, the Amherst Housing Production Plan prioritized “stable and affordable” housing for homeless individuals through Housing First/rapid rehousing efforts and cites the need to provide 15 housing units for the homeless population. Two years later, the housing needs remain unmet, as there are 19 chronically homeless individuals in Amherst.

Chronically homeless individuals often find themselves going through the “revolving door” of emergency responses, such as homeless shelter, police calls, psych units, hospitals, ambulance, and jails, all of which can cost towns and taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars each year. For example, the Springfield 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness refers to Baystate Hospital’s study that depicts how ten chronically homeless individuals who frequently interacted with the emergency response system accumulated hospital costs averaging \$100,000 per person each year.¹ It would be much more cost-effective to re-invest these funds into permanent housing options coupled with supportive services.

Chronic homelessness is also fatal. Last year, at least 3 people who had histories of homelessness died in Amherst. As winter arrives this year, some chronically homeless individuals will choose to sleep outdoors instead of in the shelter. For those who utilize the shelter, they may need to vie for space given the limited beds and the consistently high number of shelter guests. In past shelter seasons, such as the November 2013 - May 2014 season, the Craig’s Place Emergency Shelter Statistics reports that on average, 3 people were turned away from the shelter per night.²

Individuals without safe, stable and affordable housing have a greater likelihood of drawing upon municipal resources that do not help them stabilize in the long run. In 2012, the Amherst Police Department reported that 775 calls were made regarding homeless individuals, which amounts to approximately \$58,000. These temporary interventions are expensive, yet they do not help individuals leave homelessness behind. Sarah La Cour of the Business Improvement District also points to the presence of homeless individuals in downtown. These individuals spend time there, because they have

¹ https://www.springfield-ma.gov/housing/fileadmin/housing/homelessness/All_Roads_Lead_Home.pdf

² <https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/30355>

no place to call home. These signs underscore the need for our community to secure stable housing for chronically homeless individuals as soon as possible.

3. Estimated timeline from receipt of funds to Project completion.

ACC expects to begin the project in July 2016 and complete the project within 36 months as outlined above.

4. Acquisition or preservation of threatened resources.

N/A

5. Population(s) to be served by the Project.

ACC will serve chronically homeless individuals with the housing stabilization program. Chronically homeless individuals often have special needs, which include mental illness, co-occurring mental illness and substance use issues, physical disabilities, and developmental disabilities. Their average income ranges from no income to 20% AMI or \$11,275.

Eligible applicants must fulfill the following criteria:

Criteria	Description	Documentation
1. HUD's definition of chronic homelessness.	Must have been homeless continuously for a year or have had 4 homeless episodes in past 3 years AND have a disabling condition. Disabling condition includes diagnosable substance abuse disorder, serious mental illness, chronic physical illness, etc.	1. Written verification from social service provider on length of homelessness 2. Written proof from medical/mental health care provider for disability
2. Amherst resident	Must be an Amherst resident	Written verification from service provider of individuals' homeless history.
3. Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) score of 10 or higher	An evidence-formed and field-tested standard assessment tool, VI-SPDAT gauges the risk level of homeless individuals and recommends the most appropriate housing and service interventions. ACC will prioritize qualifying VI-SPDAT applications based on score and caseworker experience with individuals.	ACC will conduct VI-SPDAT on individuals.

6. How will the CPA investment in your property, facility, or project be maintained over time?

ACC will be applying for multi-year funding from CPA. ACC will also fundraise and apply for funds from Amherst Club, Rotary Club, Community Foundation of Western Mass, and other local community organizations for this project.

During the tenure of this program, ACC caseworkers will immediately help participants apply for mainstream, affordable housing, such as public and subsidized housing, to ensure they remain housed over the long run. ACC staff will also help participants increase their income through employment or disability income and contribute 30% of adjusted gross income to monthly rent.

After this project is completed, ACC may re-apply to CPA to renew the program or approach other sources.

7. Which relevant Town committees and/or commissions are you working with?

The Amherst Housing Authority Board of Commissioners voted unanimously in support of ACC's application for CPA funds to implement the program (See attached letter of support). We are in contact with the Housing and Sheltering Committee, who have affirmed the need for urgent housing for the chronically homeless in Amherst.

8. Other information regarding the Project deemed necessary for CPAC

Amherst Community Connections has developed the reputation of successfully housing chronically homeless individuals through outreach services provided at its main office, mobile sites, on-site shelter services, and direct networking with the chronically homeless population of Amherst for over six years. ACC staff guide chronically homeless individuals throughout the housing process, from identifying suitable housing options and their eligibility criteria and completing numerous housing applications to practicing for housing interviews, gathering sufficient move-in funds, and maintaining housing tenure. However, ACC is acutely aware of the fact that these individuals' need for low barrier housing is far greater than the actual supply. Thus, ACC looks forward to working with CPA to administer a three-year housing stabilization program that will give its participants a new lease on life.

Please find the following documents attached to the project application:

Attachment 1. Menu of Services and Referrals Available to Tenants

Attachment 2. Preliminary Budget for Housing Stabilization Program

Attachment 3. Letters of support from Amherst Housing Authority, Eliot Homeless Services, and Kamins Real Estate

Attachment 1. Menu of Services & Referrals Available to Tenants

1. General Supportive Services	ACC	Local agencies
a. New tenant orientation/move-in assistance	X	
b. Tenant's rights education	X	
c. Case management or services coordination	X	
d. Individualized service planning	X	X
e. Referrals to other services and programs	X	
f. Crisis intervention planning	X	X
g. Peer support / support groups	X	X
h. Recreational/socialization opportunities	X	
i. Legal assistance referral		X
j. Transportation	X	
k. Nutritional education	X	
l. Emergency financial assistance	X	
m. Other (specify):		
2. Independent Living Skills		
a. Personal financial management and budgeting	X	
b. Credit issues	X	
c. Representative payee	X	X
d. Entitlement assistance/benefits application & counseling	X	
e. Training in cooking/meal preparation	X	
f. Training in personal hygiene and self-care	X	
g. Training in housekeeping	X	
h. Training in use of public transportation	X	
J. Assistance for activities of daily living		X
k. Other (specify):		
3. Health/Medical Services		
a. Routine medical/dental/eye care		X

b. Medication management or monitoring		X
c. Health and wellness education	X	X
d. Nursing/visiting nurse care		X
e. Home health aide services		X
f. Pain management		X
g. Other (specify):		
4. Mental Health Services		
a. Individual psychological assessment		X
b. Individual counseling		X
c. Group therapy		X
d. Support group		X
e. Peer mentoring/support	X	
f. Medication management/ monitoring	X	X
g. Education about mental illness	X	X
h. Psychiatric services		X
i. Other (specify):		
5. Substance Abuse Services		
a. Recovery readiness services (tenants with active addictions)		X
b. Relapse prevention and recovery planning	X	X
c. Substance abuse counseling		X
d. Methadone/Vivitrol maintenance		X
e. Harm-reduction education		X
f. AA/NA meeting		X
g. Other (specify):		
6. Vocational Services		
a. Job skills inventory	X	
b. Job readiness assistance—resumes, covering	X	

letter, interviewing skills		
c. Job retention assistance—support, coaching	X	
d. Job development/job placement assistance	X	
e. Opportunities for tenants to volunteer	X	
f. Other (specify):		

Attachment 2. Preliminary Budget for Housing Stabilization Program

	TOTAL	1 YEAR	3 YEARS	Source
RENT-RELATED				
1-BR apartment/month	900			
Max. Rent subsidy*/unit/year	10,800			
Max. Rent for 5 units/year		54,000	162,000	CPA funds
Broker's fee/unit	450			
5 units/year		2,250	6,750	CPA funds
Subsidy administration fee/unit/month	40			
5 units/year		2,400	7,200	
Rent-Related Costs		58,650	175,950	CPA funds
SUPPORTIVE SERVICES				
Case Management Services				
Supervisory Support (0.05 FTE)		2,250	6,750	CPA funds
Housing & Services Case Manager (0.5 FTE)		18,720	56,160	CPA funds
Total Salary		20,970	62,910	CPA funds
Tax & Benefits		4,199	12,597	CPA funds
Total Salary and Benefits		25,169	75,507	CPA funds
Program Costs				
Household supplies/furniture		2,500	7,500	ACC (in-kind)
Office Supplies		200	600	ACC (in-kind)
Food supplies		300	900	ACC (in-kind)
Postage		50	150	ACC (in-kind)
Staff transportation & Parking		300	900	ACC (in-kind)
Training & Development		200	600	ACC (in-kind)
Insurance		500	1,500	ACC (in-kind)
Miscellaneous (Supplies, etc.)		150	450	ACC (in-kind)
Rent—Office/Service Space		600	1,800	ACC (in-kind)
Administrative Costs		480	1,440	ACC (in-kind)
Total Program Costs		5,280	15,840	ACC (in-kind)
TOTAL CPA REQUEST		83,819	251,457	
TOTAL ACC IN-KIND		5,280	15,840	
TOTAL BUDGET		89,099	267,297	

*Assuming all tenants have 0 income.

Amherst Housing Authority

33 Kellogg Avenue, Suite 81
Amherst, MA 01002-2169

Housing Management
(413) 256-0206

TDD Available
FAX (413) 256-8551

Section 8, MRVP, AHVP Programs
(413) 256-8128

December 8, 2015

Dear Members of the Community Preservation Act Committee,

The Commissioners of the Amherst Housing Authority (AHA) have voted unanimously to support the application by Amherst Community Connections (ACC) for Community Preservation Act funding to establish a tenant-based rental assistance program for chronically homeless individuals in Amherst.

We believe that the program proposed by ACC addresses the urgent housing needs of an extremely vulnerable population while representing an innovative, collaborative, caring and cost-effective approach that can be embraced by the entire Amherst community.

The primary mission of the AHA is to preserve and to expand decent, safe and affordable housing for low and moderate income households, elders, and persons with disabilities and to support programs, services and resources that promote economic self-sufficiency, and improve community quality of life, tenant empowerment and responsibility. The tenant-based rental assistance program proposed by ACC brings our respective missions together to fulfill a community wide need. The extraordinary demand for affordable housing in Amherst, combined with the budgetary limitations, regulations and a backlog of pre-qualified tenants awaiting housing through the state and federally funded programs administered by the AHA, mean that the AHA's resources are, in large part, committed to serving current and pre-qualified participants. Centralized waiting lists for federally subsidized housing are now approaching 6 years. Waiting lists for AHA owned and/or state subsidized housing have an average wait of 4 years. Funding for both federal and state rapid rehousing programs has largely been suspended. The result is that the capacity for the AHA to meet those urgent housing needs of the chronically homeless, particularly if additional supportive services are necessary, is severely limited by our current resources.

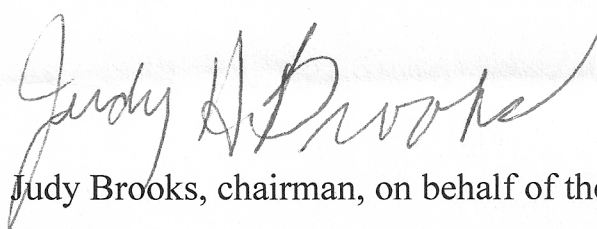
A tenant-based rental assistance program for the chronically homeless in Amherst, administered by Amherst Community Connections, would fulfill a significant need

for supportive, immediate housing for extremely low income individuals in our community. The Amherst Housing Authority Commissioners and Executive Director support ACC's proposal and, should the CPA vote to fund it, are prepared to extend what relevant administrative advice and experience we can offer to insure the future success of ACC's tenant-based rental assistance program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Amherst Housing Authority Board of Commissioners

 12-8-15

Judy Brooks, chairman, on behalf of the Commissioners



November 17, 2015

Dear CPA Committee,

Eliot CHS - PATH has provided homeless outreach services to individuals in the Amherst area for many years. Our master-level clinicians provide mental health assessment, treatment, advocacy, benefit assistance, Department of Mental Health referrals, housing assistance and other support services to the adult homeless population. PATH Outreach Clinicians are on the ground, identifying the most vulnerable individuals, collaborating with local social service agencies, and providing the transitional support to help individuals transition from the streets and shelter to permanent housing.

For the past five years, Eliot CHS - PATH has worked with Amherst Community Connections to address homeless individuals' various needs. For example, last month, a young man who had been homeless for at least 4 years was able to access permanent housing through the collaborative efforts of Eliot CHS - PATH and Amherst Community Connections.

On behalf of Eliot CHS - PATH, I would like to offer support to Amherst Community Connections' CPA project of providing tenant-based rental vouchers to 10 chronically homeless individuals. This population faces many dire needs, which include stable housing and accompanying supportive services. We look forward to working with Amherst Community Connections on this project in an effort to help PATH eligible chronically homeless individuals become engaged and support their transitions to permanent housing.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at jlevy@eliotchs.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jay S. Levy".

Jay S. Levy, LICSW
Regional Manager
Eliot CHS PATH - Homeless Services



400 AMITY STREET

AMHERST, MASS 01002

FAX: (413) 253-0537

PHONE: (413) 253-2515

November 17, 2015

RE: Amherst CPA Committee

To Whom It May Concern:

Kamins Real Estate manages over 800 apartments, condos, and multi-family homes in Amherst and in the surrounding area. We have over 100 one-bedroom apartments that fall under the rent cap for people who have Section 8 vouchers. In addition, we have more than 35 studio apartment units in downtown Amherst. For example, Colonial Village, Mill Hollow and The Perry Apartments are all sites that fit within the boundaries of the Section 8 rental payment standards.

We appreciate the good work that Amherst Community Connections does for the community, providing supportive services to help homeless and low-income individuals find and retain housing. Some of our tenants, having sought housing and funding assistance from Amherst Community Connections, were able to maintain their tenancies with us through Amherst Community Connections' excellent case management, advocacy and information/referral services.

Our company would be glad to lend our support for their application for CPA funds, as Amherst Community Connections provides 10 tenant-based rental vouchers to chronically homeless individuals. We would like to partner with Amherst Community Connections to secure studio apartments and one-bedroom apartments for its program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patrick D. Kamins II", is written over a horizontal line.

Patrick D. Kamins II